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The CIO At Last Offers Some Leadership

Time for Counter Attack on The Civil Liberties Front

The resolution on civil liberties finally adopted at the CIO convention was much stronger than the position taken by Walter Reuther in his annual report. Indeed for the first time the CIO now offers what we have all hoped for—a lead by a mass organization, with political power. "Now is the time," the resolution declares, "for a counter attack on the civil liberties front." The concrete proposals, ignored in most newspaper coverage, provide a rallying point around which, for the first time in many years, an effective resistance to the witch hunt may be built.

These are the proposals and we urge every reader to press for action on the CIO program in his own organizations. The first is that the Judiciary Committees of the House and Senate appoint a joint committee "for the purpose of investigating infractions of civil liberties throughout the land" and to recommend "ways and means of combatting these infractions which are weakening the fabric of our society and our world leadership." The second is that this joint committee "review all Congressional legislation over the past forty years dealing with the Communist problem." The CIO resolution asks that this review be made with two purposes in mind. One is to ensure that Federal legislation "contain all necessary powers to deal with espionage and sabotage." The other is that "all Federal legislation limiting what people can think and say be removed from the statute books." Such a Congressional inquiry could become an historic turning-point.

No Mention of "Subversion"

It is heartening to see that the CIO limits its concern for protective legislation to the concrete crimes of "espionage and sabotage," omitting altogether the indefinable bogeyman pseudo-crime of "subversion" which has begun to haunt our law and provides an excuse for the policing of ideas. The CIO proposal is broad enough to cover a campaign to repeal all legislation which makes it possible to punish or proscribe people for their ideas, as in the sedition provisions of the Smith Act, and the registration provisions of the McCarran Act, tightened to the point of political lunacy by the Humphrey-Morse-Douglas amendments last August. The resolution attacks the outlawry of the Communist party in the new legislation as "a sign of weakness." It says that portion of the new Communist Control Act which calls for "the branding and busting of 'Communist-infiltrated' unions constitutes a dangerous first step toward state control of all trade unions."

The resolution, like the Reuther report, steps warily around the First and Fifth amendments. One wonders why the CIO can't quite mention them. But the resolution does attack the most important limitation on free speech in our time. This is not sedition and registration laws, bad as they are, but the fear engendered by the Twentieth Century public pillory—the Congressional committee "investigating" radical ideas. We put the word in quotation marks because even the investigation of ideas was long lost sight of in a planned campaign to terrorize intellectuals of all kinds into abject conformity. The resolution warns that "the public revulsion against McCarthy" is not necessarily the end of McCarthyism as practiced by others, declares that the investigating committees have gone beyond "their legitimate function of obtaining information for legislative purposes" and calls on Congress to adopt a code of fair procedure limiting their scope and ensuring fair treatment of witnesses.

A Chance to End Soliloquoy

These sentiments, while so familiar to us as to seem trite, are not to be measured by their degree of novelty. They offer a chance to broaden out what has too long been a soliloquoy. This program reflects the CIO's alarm over that invasion by the witch hunt of the factory to which we called attention in last week's issue. The security program in the trade union movement is no longer the concern only of the besieged Left unions and the government employees. It now begins to affect workers in most of industry, and the opportunity is offered of mobilizing a substantial political force against the thought control drive. The roll call of the resolutions committee which drafted this program indicates its potential. McDonald of the steel workers, Curran of the NMU, Potofsky of the Amalgamated, Rieve of the Textile Workers, Quill of the TWU, Mazey of the Auto Workers and Helstein of the Packinghouse Union were among the framers.

When it is remembered that the labor movement in America is fat with success, that its leaders are part of the upper crust in our great industrial cities, that the rank-and-file are only now beginning to stir after the Golden Era of New Deal and Fair Deal, this call for a "counter attack" in the field of civil liberties may be seen in its proper perspective. Here is a chance to reach a wider audience with a message for which the system of security clearances on the docks and in the mills has prepared the minds of workers. The chance comes just when McCarthy's exposure and condemnation by his own colleagues has made the country wonder about the witch hunt. And not the least important reason for swinging behind the CIO program is that it may shame labor's liberal Democratic allies in Congress into making amends for their cowardly abandonment of dignity and principle last August.

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The CIO Turns A Flip-Flop At the Last Moment and Supports Ike

A Surprising Postscript to Reuther's Report on Foreign Policy

The Reuther report on foreign policy to the CIO convention was pretty standard Democratic party and ADA line. Military security was linked with "protection from internal subversion" by the CIO president. Like Symington he echoed the Air Force lobby, and even went so far as to speak as if the judgment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was something sacrosanct. Here is a typical passage: "In the field of military defense, budgetary rather than defense requirements have seemed to be the basic criterion. Cuts in military appropriations," Reuther said, "especially the Air Force, were urged and adopted without the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

This is loose and feeble stuff, which reflects the labor movement's tendency to regard large military appropriations as a useful means of maintaining employment. This is what has been leading it into alliance with the aviation lobby and the military bureaucracy. The talk about budgetary rather than defense considerations being the criterion is loose; Reuther knows how wasteful the military services can be, and how insatiable is their appetite. As for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it only reflects the bureaucracy it heads. This is the same Joint Chiefs which had a majority last summer for war in Indo-China and more recently for a blockade of China.

Nothing more completely reveals the inadequacy of Leftist stereotypes in the analysis of the present situation than the contrast between this kind of talk from the leader of Detroit's auto workers and the activities of Reuther's old antagonist, Charles Wilson of General Motors, as Secretary of Defense. The head of the largest defense contractor in the country cuts the military budget and helps the President veto the belligerence of the military while the head of the CIO defers to the Joint Chiefs of Staff! The capitalist cuts war expenditures while the labor leader deplores the reduction in "defense spending"!

Reuther Frightening, Too

An ambivalence like that of the liberal Democrats marks Reuther's discussion of the world situation. On the one hand, he says Dulles "frightened . . . the free world with his talk of massive retaliation." On other hand, Reuther goes on immediately to say, "but in Indo-China, America's policy seemed closer to appeasement than to all-out militant resistance." What does this mean, if anything? "Massive retaliation" was a form of "all-out militant resistance." How could you have "all-out militant resistance" in Indo-China without sending in American troops to *resist*—the desire of the natives for independence?

As for frightening our free world allies, they must be a good deal more frightened when they hear this kind of talk coming from America's ablest and most intelligent labor leader. What does he mean by "appeasement"? The French "appeased" Ho by giving up North Vietnam, but Ho appeased the French by giving up South Vietnam when it was his for the taking. Both sides gave something for the sake of peace, as was done in Korea. If this mutual adjustment is to be stigmatized as "appeasement," how can there ever be peace in the world?

Reuther accuses the Administration of "bluster" but shows no inclination for a more reasonable policy himself. This is evident in his attitude toward co-existence where his words are hardly distinguishable from the paranoid utterances of senators like Jenner. Reuther sees the co-existence line "as a device to ensnare and entrap millions of men and women throughout the world who live in poverty and without immediate hope of improving their living standards and their status in society."

Suffers from The Same Rigidity

Yet a few lines later in his report Reuther is accusing the Administration of "rigidity" in foreign affairs and of giving millions of people in the world "the totally false impression that it is America that is belligerent and the Soviet Union that wants peace." Well, isn't it rigidity to take the same attitude toward a conciliatory Soviet policy, as toward a belligerent one? And what else are people to think when even the head of the CIO sees mysterious dangers in co-existence? If he doesn't want co-existence, does he want war? And if he doesn't want war, then doesn't he have to take co-existence?

The Reuther report is full of brave words about Point Four and spending money abroad to lighten the lives of common people so they will not succumb to Communism. But how is this to be brought about without relaxation of tension and co-existence? If the world is to live in tense enmity, piling up armament in a deadly race, how much money and labor power will be left for social reforms and improvements?

The labor movement is going to have to wake up soon to its own stake in a relaxation of world tension. The witch hunt that is beginning to be a bread and butter matter for the worker in the shop and on the dock owes much of its origin, direction and planning to the shrewd master-minding of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Its 1946 report on Communism and Socialism blueprinted the thought control drive, and the ultimate objective of the drive was to wreck the labor movement and turn back the clock of social progress.

Case Study in "Liberation"

"In Latin America we supported the overthrow of a government in which there had been a marked degree of Communist infiltration; but once the Communists were uprooted the Administration gave aid and the prestige of its support to a regime which can only be described as anti-democratic. Guatemalan democrats have been placed in jail because they believe in democracy. Democratic trade unionists in Guatemala, fighting to re-establish their unions on a clean basis, have been harassed by their government, which much of the time seems far more sympathetic to the profit hopes of the United Fruit Company than to the legitimate aspirations of the great majority of Guatemalan workers and farmers."—Reuther's Annual Report to the CIO.

Why Labor Needs Co-Existence

But that plan could not have succeeded except against the background of tension between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Should tension flare up again, the witch hunt will be intensified and every labor leader who was once allied with the Communists or sympathetic to socialism will come under suspicion of those watching for "infiltration." Tension abroad is indissolubly linked with tension at home. The fight for a peaceful world is also the fight for a free America in which the labor movement can thrive.

P.S. That the labor movement only indulges in this kind of demagogy as long as it seems safe is evident from the CIO foreign policy resolutions, particularly No. 40 on the Far Eastern Crisis. These were written after the Reuther report and since the clash between Eisenhower on the one side and Knowland and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the other over the question of blockading China.

The CIO resolution says a blockade might bring war and declares "President Eisenhower has demonstrated restraint and realistic understanding which reflects the thinking of the overwhelming majority of the American people and our allies." Says the CIO, "We recognize, as do sensible men everywhere, that the answer to these problems does not lie in preventive war; in blockades that can only heighten tensions and create the atmosphere in which international incidents can set off atomic war." So the CIO is itself "ensnared and entrapped" by co-existence, after all!

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Notes On The News

No "deal" will, of course, be made to swap the 35 Chinese students we hold for the airmen the Chinese have accused of espionage; we occidentals are as sensitive about "face" as the Orientals. But this does not preclude the possibility that we might hasten their clearance if Peiping on its side should grant the airmen an amnesty. We can be as subtle as Bret Harte's "heathen Chinee" when the occasion arises. Anyway these subtle interstices between the apparently rigid attitudes of both capitals is where the British and the Russians hope to get their respective partners off their high horses . . .

The American press is underplaying the gravity of the split between British and American opinion over the question of using atomic weapons. Recent speeches by Montgomery and Gruenther have alarmed British opinion because if atomic weapons are used the Russians would strike first at atomic air bases in Britain. That might well mean the end of Britain. The U.S., however, is far more deeply committed to atomic warfare than the American public realizes and unwilling to subject use of tactical and strategic atomic weapons to political control . . .

Another crucial subject on which the public here is ill informed is the real nature of the new Japanese "caretaker" government and the ugly forces rising behind it. All the news dispatches dutifully refer to the new Prime Minister Hatoyama as "pro-American" as if the repetition would make him so. He still smarts, however, from the fact that MacArthur purged him as pro-Fascist in 1946, and is riding a wave of anti-Americanism. This springs from discontent with continued occupation, and the extent to which Japan is tied to the dangerous kite of American foreign policy. The Left, which applauds the friendlier feelings toward Communist China which accompanies this wave almost as a corollary, shuts its eyes to other aspects. When Colonel Masanobu Tsuji, the conqueror of Singapore, can win applause by attacking President Truman (as he did recently) as "the World's Number One War Criminal" the danger signals are obvious and it is time American public opinion became aware of them.

New Trap for Libertarians

There could be no greater trap for the Left and for those who believe in liberty than to acquiesce in the newly advertised plans of the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Department of Justice to go after rightist "hate" groups and publications. This could only fasten thought control more firmly upon the country by giving it the enhanced status of a respectable impartiality. Remember that the Un-American Committee began as a misguided effort from left of center (Dickstein-McCormick) to police Fascist ideas and within two years was being used against the New Deal.

The Second Hand Piano Dealer

The Case of the Second Hand Piano Dealer may yet become famous. The issue in the case of William Shonick is whether business men may be denied licenses purely on political grounds. A teacher who lost his job after an FBI informer named him as a Communist, Shonick has been a second hand piano dealer here for three years. Police conceded that he had complied with all regulations but this year denied him his annual renewal of license. The factual grounds cited were like those in a loyalty case: that he was present at a public meeting against discrimination addressed by Paul Robeson in 1949, that he had attended a public meeting in 1951 to defend victims of the Smith Act, that he went to a private party to raise funds for the defense of a Federal employe accused of false statement, and that he had pleaded the Fifth last year when asked if he were a Communist.

The police officer who recommended that his license not be renewed made an interesting witness. He said he didn't think anybody should be penalized for pleading the Fifth and he also volunteered that he didn't think a man's political ideology had anything to do with trade in second hand pianos. He claimed, however, that denial of the license was required by one of the findings in the preamble to the new Anti-Communist Control Law. This says that "unlike other parties" the Communist party recognizes "no constitutonal or statutory limitation" on its conduct. Ergo, a man named as a Communist could not be certified as of that law-abiding character required of licensees.

Perpetual Imprisonment?

The Smith Act makes it a crime to advocate overthrow of the government, to circulate literature teaching such doctrines or to belong to any group which so advocates. In the first Foley Square prosecution of the 11 top Communist leaders they were indicted for "conspiracy to advocate" and also for "membership" in the Communist party. The government shelved the latter indictment, perhaps because it feared that the outlawry of a party per se might not stand up in the courts. Now, however, detainers for trial on the second indictment have been filed against the eleven, and Irving Potash, the first to be released, was arrested before he left the prison grounds at Leavenworth and transferred last week to a jail in New York. The re-arrest shockingly violates the spirit if not the exact letter of the constitutional safeguard against double jeopardy.

We salute the passing of a great lawyer and a lifelong champion of civil liberty in the death of Arthur Garfield Hays.

Wishing You All A Merry Xmas and A Happy New Year

I want to thank each and every reader for two wonderful years, and for the certain prospect (as judged by the first response on renewals) of a third. I hope the New Year will be a happier one for all who believe in peace and freedom. I think it will.

Now for a personal note. The *Weekly* has been a success and in the black (1) because of your support and (2) because it has been a one-man job. It will have to continue such until I can push circulation up by another couple thousand. I was warned that a weekly of this kind was a back-breaking job. It is.

All this leads up (as nervously as an office boy asking the boss for a day off to see the ball-game) to the announcement that I am taking two weeks off for a badly needed and (if I may say so) well-earned rest over the holidays.

The *Weekly* goes to press on Thursdays and is dated the following Monday. This means it will not go to press the Thursday before Xmas and the Thursday before New Year's. It will resume the first Thursday in January, for the issue dated Monday, January 10. You will still get 50 issues this circulation year, but in the future the *Weekly* will be published only 48 times a year, allowing two weeks off at the end of August, two weeks at the end of December.

I will be back on the job fresh as the proverbial daisy when Congress reconvenes on Wednesday, January 5. Till then, again, a Merry Xmas and Happy New Year. Those of you who have already put gift subs in the *Weekly's* stocking, my thanks. Give the *Weekly* to a friend for the holidays, and help me by getting your renewal in early.

With warmest greetings,

—I. F. STONE

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Thanks to Kinsey, The Baby-Sitter Escaped Subversion

Carl Braden Convicted: The Nightmare at Louisville

The affair at Louisville is one of those nightmares we thought could no longer happen. It has the flavor of Nineteenth Century labor frame-ups. We have been accustomed to more sedate prosecutions. This is as raw as the home made whiskey still being distilled in the Kentucky hills.

A group of friends, a tiny band of the assorted radicals to be found even now in almost every American city, helped a Negro buy a house in a white neighborhood. They joined together to defend him when he became the target of mysterious shootings. When the house was dynamited, six of them were indicted for sedition under state law and one accused of blowing up the house himself. The supposed motive: to stir up racial discord. Among the six was a Louisville newspaperman, Carl Braden, and his wife. Braden was the first to be tried.

The most disturbing aspect of the Louisville affair is the way the resources of the FBI were mobilized to help the Kentucky authorities put over as palpable a fake as anything in the annals of American radical prosecutions.

Before the jury which convicted Braden last week and sent him to jail for 15 years (and a $2,500 fine) were paraded some of the most notorious informers employed by the immigration service and the FBI. Ben Gitlow, Matt Svetic and Maurice Malkin were on hand to testify on the nature of the Communist conspiracy and the literature seized in a raid on the homes of the indicted. "Mere possession of such literature," the Commonwealth's Attorney, Hamilton, argued, "raises a presumption of guilt."

Bunche's Accusers Also Turned Up

Among the ten professional ex-Communists or FBI spies who testified at the trial were the two, Manning Johnson and Leonard Patterson, who were accused of perjury after they called Ralph Bunche a Communist at a United Nations loyalty hearing. Patterson at least still claimed to be a per diem consultant for the Justice Department. Manning Johnson told the jury the Communists planned to establish a Black Republic in which all property owned by whites would be expropriated and given to Negroes.

This fit the mental climate established by the first prosecution witness, an FBI undercover agent named Mrs. Martha Edmiston, who testified that Communists were taught to incite racial trouble whenever possible. Mrs. Edmiston, a star performer in the past before the Ohio Un-American Activities Committee, thought the Communist party of the U.S. was founded in 1915 and the Russian "I should say in the 1860's" and offered this sensation:

Q. Was an actual revolution planned?

A. Yes. It was planned for Jan. 12, 1941.

Another FBI informant, Arthur Paul Strunk, of Dayton, Ohio, finally admitted under cross-examination that there was nothing in the constitution of the Communist party about overthrowing the government by force and violence.

Strunk: I don't see anything . . . It was in the by-laws.

Defense Counsel: You say it was in the by-laws?

Strunk: I wouldn't say straight out.

Braden A Lifelong Socialist

Braden denied that he was or ever had been a Communist but admitted to being a lifelong socialist, interested in many labor and peace causes. "They want us to disarm," the prosecutor said in his summation to the jury, "so we can be taken over without much difficulty."

The prosecutor asked the jury to convict and make the case "a milestone" in ending "this setting whites against blacks . . ." But neither the Kentucky authorities nor the local FBI office seem to have done much about the bombing of the Negro home in a white neighborhood which precipitated the affair.

Even in this trial, tantalizing bits of evidence cropped up. The Wades, a Negro family, had moved into a white neighborhood. A fiery cross had been set off to warn them. Shots had been fired through their wondows. According to the testimony of a county patrolman, when the explosion occurred, "In a matter of a few minutes, there was a lot of people there, mostly police" but "*There were no neighbors that I know of.*"

The explosion occurred at 12:30 a.m. It seems very strange that no neighbors showed up unless indeed they knew something was in the wind and stayed away lest they be implicated. Wade testified, "We got threats a week or two before that they were going to bomb the house."

The prosecution and trial stayed as far away as possible from the bombing. Braden was a copy reader on the Louisville *Courier-Journal* and extended testimony was even allowed on whether he had ever "slanted" copy. His colleagues swore that he had not. A baby-sitting neighbor of the Bradens was questioned closely on whether they had ever tried to subvert her. She had come through her experiences as sitter among the Braden books unscathed. "I just read three books," she testified, "a couple of those Dr. Kinsey sex books, and some poems."

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